having a great number of local branches, or lineages, spread throughout Shillukland, and there are no periodic reunions.

Members of a lineage are bound not only by kinship ties but also by ties arising through occupation of the same territory. The lineage is an effective political and social unit. A person generally thinks in terms of his localised lineage and refers most often to the founder of his lineage in the district occupied. In relation to members of lineages of other clans, however, reference is most likely to be made to the founding ancestor of a person's clan. As previously mentioned, the occupants of a settlement belong to a collection of independent lineages which graft themselves onto the genealogical structure of the dominant lineage through marriage with its female members.

INHERITANCE

Only the smallest lineage unit is of any importance in the inheritance of property. Pumphrey states that there are no definite rules for the inheritance of chattels.(1) If distribution has not been made before death they are usually taken by the eldest son, or by the next of kin where there are no sons. Cattle are taken by the succeeding *gol* leader, either a married son or a married brother. He cannot do exactly as he likes with them for he inherits certain traditional obligations. He has the moral obligation to use his herds for providing bridewealth to enable the male members of the *gol* to marry, in order of seniority, and it is considered wrong for a *gol* leader to marry a second time himself while there are men of his *gol* still unmarried and requiring cattle. The *gol* leader is also responsible for paying compensation in cattle for any wrong which has been committed by one of his household. Finally, it is recognised that no cattle of the family herds should be sold except in times of famine and to purchase grain. Pumphrey states that a breach of these terms of trust would "be universally censured but would probably not be interfered with by the courts."(2)

Uncultivated land belongs to anyone who settles on it.

MARRIAGE

The Shilluk are polygynous; a wealthy and influential man has three or four wives, while members of the *kwareth* may have several more. Marriage is forbidden with any member of one's father's clan and between all persons in respect of whom relationship, either through the father or mother, could be traced directly. Apart from these obstacles it appears that freedom of choice is generally allowed to both sexes in matrimonial matters.

Bridewealth

Bridewealth consists of ten head of cattle and sheep and spears. In addition the suitor makes small gifts and performs services to win the favour of his future father- and mother-in-law. Bridewealth discussions and arguments proceed between representatives appointed by the suitor's *gol* and by the girl's gol.

(1) Pumphrey, *S.N.R.* 1941, Vol.XXIV, p.24.
(2) *Ibid.*, p.23.

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will get her a calf-skin. The mother of the girl is supposed to tie the calf-skin the first time the girl wears it to a dance. If her mother is dead, then a woman the same age as her mother ties it for her.

Some Begging Customs of the Women.

The Shilluk women seem to derive much pleasure from begging for cattle from some of the richer men of the tribe. The occasion is made a holiday for the women of the village, and they go forth in their finest clothes. If the recipient of their honour lives at some distance, the start is made early in the morning, and all the women of the village go. If there are too many women in the village, then the women of a certain age go. The women of two different villages will not unite to go on these expeditions. The proper season for these begging dances is just before the rains begin, though they may be held any time during the dry season.

The women decide upon the man to be honoured by their party before they start. Occasionally, they honour a man from their own village, but in that case they only ask for a sheep. Often they go five or six miles, and sometimes they go as far as fifteen or twenty miles. While they are gone the men must stay at home to care for the babies. Often, on such occasions, a mother will leave a tiny baby at home for the whole day. Usually, they object to leaving their babies at home, but for this event it is different.

The man to be honoured is not warned, lest he hide from them. Should the man they are seeking be absent from the village, the women hang a string of beads made from the shell of the ostrich egg (rek) in the enclosure between his two houses. When he returns, he says, "Who brought this rek?" His wife replies, "The women brought it." He asks, "What do they want?" His wife replies, "An ox." His wife says "They will return." He says, "They will find nothing." His wife replies, "So many should have something, I have children, so many women should not be refused by red lips." When the women return they usually get the ox.

Before the women start on such a trip they choose a leader, unless they already have one. She is called a baña. She has the powers of a magistrate. If any trouble occurs among the women, she acts as judge. She is crowned with the rek, as the chief of the village is crowned. In

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484 562 624 future expeditions of the same party she will be chief. In the village she has the right to judge cases that are strictly between women.

431 425 484 626 [535 513] A man may refuse to give an ox, making the excuse that he has nothing to give. Then the women will mutter, saying, "He kills us by making us stand in the hot sun." They seem to think he is cheating them. The man's wife may intercede on their behalf. She will put on her husband's cloth, put a rek about her neck, anoints her body with oil, and then takes the chief's spear, and dances among the women. For such a display the chief will usually relent, and tell his young men to bring out the ox. He may be very churlish, and refuse to give them what they desire. They depart, muttering curses on him and his family. If in a short time sickness should occur in his family it is attributed to the ill-will of these women. He sends a messenger to call them. They come and get the ox. He then tells them of the sickness in his family, and the women order ashes to be brought. The women fill their hands with the ashes. They then pray after this manner, "You are God. We were refused an ox by this chief. He now has sickness. We are no longer angry at him. Permit him to escape." Next they spit on the ashes they hold in their hands, and then sprinkle them all over the members of his household. The women then depart, and the patient recovers.

[753 755]

431 425 [788] When the women go to a chief and he gives them an ox, they sprinkle ashes about his house as a blessing. The ox is taken to their village, and it may be killed immediately, though it is more likely to be kept for a time. When the animal is killed the brisket is given to the old men of the village. The old women take the rump, and the younger women divide the remainder of the meat.

425 556 431 A man is glad to have the women come to beg from him, even when he refuses to give them what they desire. It is a great compliment to have the women come, as it shows that his fame has spread abroad as a rich and generous man. Then, too, the ceremony is such as to feed the vanity of the man singled out for the honour. The women usually rush up to the house shouting and singing his praises. They sing songs about his bravery, and tell of his virtues, but the chorus of their song usually is: "Brother, lead out that ox."

[533]

426 431 After a chief has given an ox, the women go away saying that he is a fine man, and a great chief. The women seem to demand a great deal. Once in a case observed, the ox was given. The women did not watch

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the animal carefully, and he made his escape, and ran away. It was too much trouble for them to catch the animal, and so they went back to the old chief and demanded that he give them another animal in exchange for the one that had escaped. The new animal was given to them, and they departed. 425 ● 431

Once some women went to dance before a chief, who was away from home. One of his followers, anxious to save the property of his master, took a whip made of hippopotamus hide, and used it freely on the women. They retreated to a considerable distance, and sat down to discuss the matter. At that time the chief returned, and he was distressed when he heard what his follower had done. He made peace with the women, and gave them the ox. [622]

Visitors from other villages are not supposed to go on these trips, nor are they allowed to eat of the meat when the animal is killed. When a woman is married and goes to the village of her husband, she is not allowed to go on these begging trips until after she has lived there a full year. The women might consent, but her husband would be angry, as it might lead to her being led astray. She does not have the right to return to her old home and go with her old friends on their begging expeditions. Women in the advanced stages of pregnancy are not permitted to go on these trips. 425 484 593 [843]

These dances are a great diversion for the women. They are looked upon as memorable occasions. The chief visited may not be in a financial position to afford to give the ox, and yet he gets full value for the animal in the prestige it gives him. 425 556 535

The women have another begging custom that is suggestive of Ruth. When a man threshes his grain he calls in the young men, who beat it out with flails. The women of the man's family winnow the grain. Often the man does not have enough women-folk to do all the work, and other women are called in to help. The helpers get all the grain that is left in the chaff as their portion. 476 462 241

Many women come to beg from the owner of the threshing floor. They do not speak to the owner of the floor, but they make a general statement that they have come to beg. They sit in silence, and watch the progress of the work. They do not ask for grain, but each woman keeps her gourd in a prominent position. When the threshing is finished, the owner of the field fills a basket with grain, and from that basket he 735 241

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735 241 fills the gourds belonging to the women. If the basket is not sufficient to fill all the gourds, and if the man is of a good disposition, he brings out enough more grain to fill them all. If the man is churlish he will say, "I have given you enough" and will refuse to give them any more than the one basket full. Sometimes a man will say, "Why do you make sport of me by coming here to beg? See, my grain is very little indeed." That is the line the man takes when he refuses altogether to give grain to the women.

788 735 241 If the women are pleased with the amount of grain that has been given them, they will bless the owner of the threshing floor. Each woman takes a few grains of the grain that has been given her, and sprinkles it on the threshing floor. As she sprinkles the grain she says, "I return you yours, I eat, and am satisfied." After such a blessing his crop the next year should be very abundant. Often the recipient will say, "I am a woman belonging to God. I am happy, because you have given to me, now I bless you."

425 556 It is an honour to have the women come to a man's floor to beg, as it implies that he is a rich man, and can supply them. However, it is often a hardship, and many of them can ill afford the grain they give away to the women. One man said that one year all the grain he raised was given to the women who begged from him, and the only way he got food for his family was by his wife's going out to other threshing floors, and begging from the owners of the floors. It is not unusual for a woman to go to a village at some distance and beg from all the men in the village. She may return with ten or more baskets of grain. Sometimes she is refused the grain that she seeks. The man who refuses to give from his [626] threshing floor is considered a very mean man, and to make a good showing, they give more than they can afford.

Men sometimes go to the threshing floors to beg, but in that case the procedure is different. The man who begs gets a basket and, unbidden, helps carry the grain to the village. At the end of the threshing the owner is supposed to give him a basket of grain, but often he is given less than that. Both sides profit. The beggars have a picnic, and the man from whom they beg is highly honoured.

24: Howell E-5 (1951-1952) 1953 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

forth from the shrine and marched northwards to beat the bounds of Shilluk country in Muomo. The march on Fashoda then began. It is accepted custom among the Shilluk that Nyikang and his followers may seize cattle, sheep or goats which cross their path (most Shilluk are wise enough to keep them out of the way) or to demand them as offerings together with other smaller gifts from the occupants of the villages through which they pass. This licensed plundering, which is often abused beyond the bounds of piety by Nyikang's retinue, is treated by the Shilluk with admirable tolerance, for they must know that such offerings go to fill the stomachs and pockets of the *kwa* Nyikwom It is a sacred duty cheerfully accepted. At one point on the march at Moro, however, their demands were thought to be excessive and were resisted, a demonstration which nearly ended in armed conflict and which delayed the party for a while.[*] They had left Akurwa on the 28th January and reached Adodo, south of Kodok, on the 4th February, and the next day, in accordance with custom, the *reth* fled to Debalo.

As we have seen, it is traditional for the *reth* to remain three nights in Debalo. In fact, *reth* Kur had already made it known that he did not intend to spend more than one night there, on the grounds that his father, Fafiti, had spent no more. Fafiti's break with tradition had been dictated by the fear that he might be deprived of office or killed by a rival and the natural anxiety of the administrative authorities to get through the ceremonies as quickly as possible. In those days, the likelihood of civil war was much greater and Fafiti had been urged to cut the installation ceremonies to a minimum.[†] Precedents of this kind count heavily in subsequent customary procedure and in this and in previous installations it was noticeable that each *reth* was inclined to follow the procedure of his father, not that of his immediate successor.[‡] This is at least one of the explanations of the variations in detail which are apparent when we compare the installation ceremonies of those *reths* of the Shilluk of which records exist.

Reth Kur's decision to remain only one night at Debalo had two main effects. In the first place, fewer of those who seek absolution for the sins of the flesh (notably the seduction of unmarried girls) were able to attend, though I am told that about fifty persons presented themselves to the *reth* for this

[*] It appears that the effigy of Nyikang was damaged in the affray and had to be taken back to Akurwa for repairs.

[†] Mr. Udal writes: "When I visited the *reth* on the 26th January, he announced his intention of spending three nights at Debalo. However, when on the 2nd February there was still no definite news of the whereabouts of Nyikang, he did not attempt to disguise his irritation at the dilatoriness of the *kwa* Nyikwom and said he would follow the precedent of his father and sleep only one night at Debalo. Accordingly, after news of Nyikang's arrival at Adodo on the evening of the 4th February had reached Fashoda, *reth* Kur *wad* Fafiti set out before sunrise for Debalo and it was arranged between the messengers of the *reth* and Nyikang that the battle should take place on the morning of the 6th February." *Reth* Kur's impatience may have been genuine, but I do not think he would have attempted to alter established custom if he had not the precedent of his father before him.

[‡] For example, see Howell and Thomson, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

28: Oyler M-5 (ca. 1918) 1918 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

for they occasionally pray to their ancestors in the same way, and also to the dead chief of the village. The chief is looked upon as a father. Infrequently they pray to the spirit of some departed friend. When a person has a pleasant dream about a departed friend, a prayer is frequently addressed to his spirit, as he is well disposed. The mother, brothers and sisters may also be invoked.

When prayer is to be offered to the spirit of a dead person, a female sheep is brought to the grave. If the person making the prayer is not the son of the deceased, the right ear is cut from the sheep, and tied to the ankle of the person making the offering, and the wounded ear is washed in a gourd of water, so that the blood remains in the water, and then the water is poured on the grave, and part of it is thrown in the eye of the sun (that is thrown out in front of the sun). It is for God so that it will go to him. The sheep becomes the property of the heir of the deceased. The prayer is offered before the ear is cut off. If the son offers, prayer is made to God and to the deceased, and then the sheep is killed as soon as the signs are right. The sheep is cut open, and the contents of the stomach and bowels are thrown on the house of the offerer, and then the meat is cooked. The meat can not be tasted until the oldest living wife of the deceased takes some of the soup in a small gourd, which is covered with a small native mat, and pours it on the grave. The soup that remains in the gourd is poured out in front of the house. The old men are then called to take the lead in eating the sacrifice. Women of all ages may eat of the sacrifice, but only the boys and old men of the males may eat, as no man of military age may eat of it. When the feast is finished the bones are carefully collected, and thrown into the river, as it would be bad if the bones of a devoted sheep should be gnawed by a dog.

While there is no set form for the prayer, and its length is determined by the sheep, yet they are all very similar, and the following is an example.

"We praise you, you, who are God, it was you, who gave me my father, who begot me. I pray to you also my father. Why did you go to the earth, and keep silence? Was not this your house before? When evil comes to your house, why do you not pray to God? Your house is given as a plaything to the people. You went to the presence of God, and we thought that nothing evil would befall us again, after you left. Now help,